

REMARKS

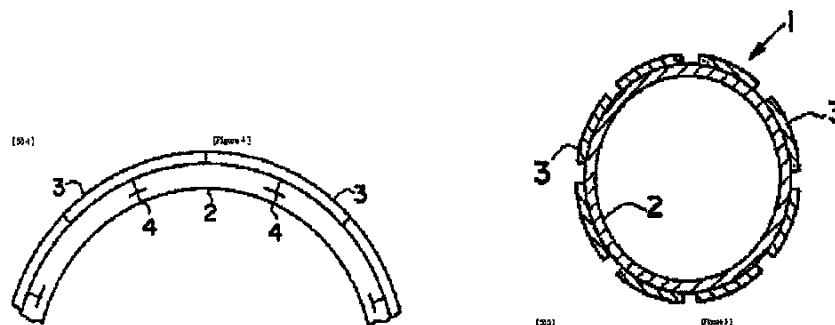
Claims 1-19 and 21-28 are pending. The final Office Action continues to reject Claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 22, 27, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 5085670 to Owaki et al. The Office Action also rejects Claims 4, 5, 6-10, 14, 15, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki. Claims 3 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki in view of European Patent Publication No. 1211214 to Floyd et al. In addition, Claims 16-19 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,326,113 to Montalvo, III. The Office Action also rejects Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,161,791 to Gentry, Jr. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki in view of Gentry and further in view of Fejer, Science and Technology. Finally, Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Owaki in view of Fejer. Claim 24 has been objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of independent Claim 22.

As will be explained in further detail below, independent Claims 1, 11, and 22 have been amended to further clarify and distinguish the cited references. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner finds that even if the apparatus of Owaki is functionally different than the claimed invention, Owaki discloses each of the structural elements of independent Claims 1, 11, and 22. In this regard, the Examiner alleges that Owaki discloses two elements that include: a drum that purportedly operates as a “chuck,” and a sealing sleeve that purportedly functions as a “core member” and includes a “chuck-engaging layer.” The sealing sleeve includes a rubber sleeve surrounded by multiple arc-shaped pieces of steel that is inserted over the drum.

Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 11 to recite that the cylindrical core member is unitary. Independent Claim 22 has been amended to include each of the recitations of dependent Claim 28, which specifies that at least an outermost layer of the core member is circumferentially continuous and cylindrical. Thus, the core member is a unitary structure or a continuous cylindrical member. In contrast, Owaki discloses multiple arc-shaped pieces of steel

that overlie and are integrated with the rubber sleeve to form the sealing sleeve. The Examiner rejects dependent Claim 28 based on Figure 1 of Owaki, which purportedly illustrates a continuous and cylindrical core member. However, a closer look at Figure 1, the abstract, and Figures 2-4 of Owaki clearly demonstrate that the sealing sleeve is not unitary or circumferentially continuous. In particular, Figure 4 of Owaki depicts an enlarged view of the sealing sleeve (1), where it is apparent that the arc-shaped pieces of steel (3) are independently attached to the rubber sleeve (2) with connection hardware (4) such that when the rubber sleeve is expanded, the pieces of steel are extended in a circumferential direction, as shown in Figure 3.



Even in an unexpanded state, the arc-shaped pieces of steel are neither unitary nor a continuous cylindrical member. Thus, even assuming that the rubber sleeve corresponds to a chuck-engaging layer, the arc-shaped pieces of steel are not equivalent to the claimed core member, as the arc-shaped pieces of steel are not unitary or continuous with one another since the pieces of steel are separately formed from one another and are held together only because they are attached to the rubber sleeve.

Furthermore, there would be no suggestion or motivation to modify Owaki to include a unitary or continuous sealing sleeve. In this regard, Applicant submits that one skilled in the art would not associate a plurality of individually arranged steel pieces with a “unitary” and/or a “circumferentially continuous and cylindrical” core member. Owaki discloses that the drum and sealing sleeve are configured to expand in a circumferential direction, which purportedly overcomes the problem of deformation of the rubber sleeve when adjusting the diameter of the payoff reel. Conversely, the core member of the claimed invention is a unitary and continuous member and, therefore, is incapable of substantially expanding or contracting. In fact, expansion and contraction of the core member is unnecessary and undesirable, as the chucks engage the

chuck-engaging layer on the inner surface of the core member such that the diameter of the core member would remain substantially unchanged. Moreover, the chuck-engaging layer is softer than the core member so that a chuck may engage the chuck-engaging layer and better grip the inner surface of the core member. Conversely, expanding the drum outwardly to engage the sealing sleeve of Owaki expands the sealing sleeve rather than increasing the engagement between the sealing sleeve and the drum to decrease the incidence of slippage. As such, there is no teaching or suggestion to modify Owaki to include a unitary or circumferentially continuous and cylindrical core member, as Owaki teaches away from such a combination.

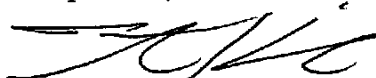
Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection of independent Claims 1, 11, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is overcome. Since the dependent claims include each of the recitations of a respective independent claim, the rejections of the dependent claims are also overcome for at least the same reasons as described above in conjunction with the independent claims.

Appl. No.: 10/786,949
Filed: 02/25/2004
Amdt. dated 06/02/2006

In view of the amendments and remarks presented above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the present claims of the present application are in condition for immediate allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefor (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



Trent A. Kirk
Registration No. 54,223

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000
Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111

ELECTRONICALLY FILED USING THE EFS-WEB ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE ON June 2, 2006.